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the need for a longer and more structured training program that exceeds 1 year;

(b) Ensure, within 90 days of appointment, that each Recent Graduate is assigned a mentor who is an employee outside the Recent Graduates' chain of command;

(c) Ensure, within 45 days of appointment, that each Recent Graduate has an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that is approved by his or her supervisor; and

(d) Provide at least 40 hours of formal interactive training per year that advances the goals and competencies outlined in each Recent Graduate's IDP. Mandatory annual training, such as information security and ethics training, does not count towards the 40-hour requirement.

§ 362.302 Eligibility.

(a) A Recent Graduate is an individual who obtained a qualifying associates, bachelors, master's, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate from a qualifying educational institution, within the previous 2 years or other applicable period provided below.

(b)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, an individual may apply for a position in the Recent Graduates Program only if the individual's application is received not later than 2 years after the date the individual completed all requirements of an academic course of study leading to a qualifying associates, bachelor's, master's, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate from a qualifying educational institution.

(2) A veteran, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2108, who, due to a military service obligation, was precluded from applying to the Recent Graduates Program during any portion of the 2-year eligibility period described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section shall have a full 2-year period of eligibility upon his or her release or discharge from active duty. In no event, however, may the individual's eligibility period extend beyond 6 years from the date on which the individual completed the requirements of an academic course of study.

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§ 362.303 Filling positions.

(a) *Announcement.* (1) When an agency accepts applications from individuals outside its own workforce, it must provide OPM information concerning opportunities to participate in the agency's Recent Graduates Program. For the purposes of this paragraph, "agency" means an Executive agency as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105 and the Government Printing Office. An Executive department may treat each of its bureaus or components (first major subdivision that is separately organized and clearly distinguished from other bureaus or components in work function and operation) as a separate agency or as part of one agency, but must do so consistent with its Delegated Examining Agreement. The information must include:

- (i) Position title, series and grade;
- (ii) Geographic location of the position;
- (iii) How to apply. A public source (e.g., a link to the agency's Web site with information on how to apply for interested individuals to seek further information about how to apply); and
- (iv) Any other information OPM considers appropriate.

(2) OPM will publish information on Recent Graduate opportunities in such form as the Director may determine.

(b) *Appointments.* (1) An agency may make appointments to the Recent Graduates Program, pursuant to a Pathways MOU executed with the OPM, under Schedule D of the excepted service in accordance with part 302 of this chapter.

(2) An agency must appoint a Recent Graduate using the excepted service appointing authority provided by § 213.3402(b) of this chapter.

(3)(i) An agency may make an initial appointment of a Recent Graduate to any position filled under this authority for which the Recent Graduate qualifies, up to the GS-09 level (or equivalent under another pay and classification system, such as the Federal Wage System), except as provided in paragraphs (b)(3)(ii) through (iv) of this section.

(ii) Initial appointments to positions for science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) occupations may

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be made at the GS-11 level, if the candidate possesses a Ph.D. or equivalent degree directly related to the STEM position the agency is seeking to fill.

(iii) Initial appointments to scientific and professional research positions at the GS-11 level for which the classification and qualification criteria for research positions apply, if the candidate possesses a master's degree or equivalent graduate degree directly related to the position the agency is seeking to fill.

(iv) Initial appointments to scientific and professional research positions at the GS-12 level for which the classification and qualification criteria for research positions apply, if the candidate possesses a Ph.D. or equivalent degree directly related to the position the agency is seeking to fill.

(v) Positions must have progressively more responsible duties that provide career advancement opportunities (*i.e.*, positions must provide for career ladder advancement).

(c) *Extensions.* An agency may extend the Program period for up to an additional 120 days to cover rare or unusual circumstances or situations. The agency's Pathways MOU must identify criteria for approving extensions.

(d) *Qualifications.* An agency must evaluate candidates using OPM Qualification Standards for the occupation and grade level of the position being filled.

(e) *Promotions.* An agency may promote any Recent Graduate who meets the qualification requirements for the position. This provision does not confer entitlement to promotion.

(f) *Trial period.* The duration of the Recent Graduates appointment in the excepted service is a trial period.

§ 362.304 Movement between agencies.

(a) A Recent Graduate may apply for and accept a new Recent Graduates appointment with another agency covered by this part, as long as the agency meets all the requirements for participating in the Recent Graduates Program.

(b) To move to the new agency, the Recent Graduate must separate from the current employing agency.

(c) The new employing agency must appoint the Recent Graduate without a break in service.

(d) Time served under the previous agency's Recent Graduates Program is credited toward the Program requirements for noncompetitive conversion eligibility to the competitive service. Because there is no break in service, the Recent Graduate does not begin a new period in the Program upon moving to the new agency.

(e) The new employing agency's plan must identify requirements for Program completion and eligibility for noncompetitive conversion.

§ 362.305 Conversion to the competitive service.

(a) An agency may noncompetitively convert a Recent Graduate who is a U.S. citizen to a competitive service term or permanent position when the Recent Graduate has:

(1) Successfully completed at least 1-year of continuous service in addition to all the requirements of the Recent Graduates Program;

(2) Demonstrated successful job performance consistent with the applicable performance appraisal program established under the agency's approved performance appraisal system that results in a rating of record (or summary rating) of at least Fully Successful or equivalent and a recommendation for conversion by the first-level supervisor; and

(3) Met the OPM Qualification Standard for the competitive service position to which the Recent Graduate will be converted.

(b) An agency must make the noncompetitive conversion effective on the date the service requirement is met, or at the end of an agency-approved extension, if applicable.

§ 362.306 Reduction in force and termination.

(a) *Reduction in force.* Recent Graduates are in excepted service Tenure Group II for purposes of § 351.502 of this chapter. Expiration of the Recent Graduates appointment is not otherwise subject to part 351 of this chapter.

(b) *Terminations.* (1) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, as a condition of employment, a